

gentlemen, who had been the obstructive agents of local administration, the practical application of such doctrines had always been intermittent, and, when the Long Parliament struck the weapon of administrative law from the hands of the Crown, it had ceased altogether. But the politics of Westminster were not those of village and borough. The events which seemed to aristocratic Parliamentarians to close the revolution seemed to the left wing of the victorious army only to begin it. In that earliest and most turbulent of English democracies, where buff-coat taught scripture politics to his general, the talk was not merely of political, but of social, reconstruction. The programme of the Levellers, who more than any other party could claim to express the aspirations of the unprivileged classes, included a demand, not only for annual or biennial Parliaments, manhood suffrage, a redistribution of seats in proportion to population, and the abolition of the veto of the House of Lords, but also that "you would have laid open all enclosures of fens and other commons, or have them enclosed only or chiefly for the benefit of the poor."^{10T} Theoretical communism, repudiated by the leading Levellers, found its expression in the agitation of the Diggers, on whose behalf Winstanley argued that, "seeing the common people of

England, by joynt consent of person and
purse, have
caste out Charles, our Norman
oppressour ... the
land now is to returne into the joynt hands
of those
who have conquered, that is the
commonours," and
that the victory over the King was
incomplete, as long
as ⁱ wee , . . remayne slaves still to the
kingly power
in the hands of lords of manors." ¹⁰⁸

Nor was it only from the visionary and
the zealot
that the pressure for redress proceeded*
When the
shattering of traditional authority seemed
for a moment
to make all things new, local grievances,
buried beneath
centuries of dull oppression, started to
life, and in
several Midland counties the peasants
rose to pull